



Nature
Foundation

25

NatureFoundation

Impact Report

Acknowledgement of Country

Nature Foundation acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians whose ancestral lands we live and work on, and recognise their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual attachment and the relationship that Aboriginal people have to country.

Lands on which Nature Foundation works

- **Bullock Bridge** – Meintangk people
- **Geegeela** – Bindjali people
- **Gidgealpa** – Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka people
- **Hiltaba** – Gawler Ranges peoples – Barngarla, Kokatha, and Wirangu countries
- **Mongolurring** – Ngadjuri people
- **Murbpook** – First Nations people of the River Murray Mallee (FPRMM) and Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Incorporated (MACAI)
- **Para Woodlands** – Kurna and Peramangk peoples
- **Payinthe** – Nature Foundation Office on Kurna land
- **South Gap** – Kokatha people
- **Tiliqua** – Ngadjuri people
- **Watchalunga** – Ngarrindjeri people
- **Witchelina** – Adnyamathanha, Kuyani and Arabana peoples

Our goals

Increasing areas of habitat are conserved and enhanced for future generations.

Nature Science knowledge that leads to evidence-based decision-making.

Nature is better understood and valued.

Engaged communities that support resilient habitats.

An inspirational organisation that is financially secure and achieves operational excellence.

Our cultural qualities

We are agile and adaptable, connecting communities through nature.

We care about each other, what we do and why we do it; we believe in the power of nature to transform lives.

We are creative and resourceful in tackling major environmental issues.

We inspire and create enjoyment through nature.

We strive for excellence in everything we do, holding each other accountable, and working to the highest ethical standards.

We are bold and adventurous in our pursuit of conservation outcomes.

The achievements outlined in our Impact Report align with the above five goal areas from our Strategic Plan, demonstrating the progress and outcomes of our work. You can view the Strategic Plan: Towards 2030 at naturefoundation.org.au/strategic-plan

Our footprint

Nature Reserves:

Bullock Bridge – 203 hectares
 Geegeela – 102 hectares
 Hiltaba – 78,000 hectares
 Mongolurring – 1,200 hectares
 Murbpook – 360 hectares
 Para Woodlands – 500 hectares
 Tiliqua – 85 hectares
 Watchalunga – 92 hectares
 Witchelina – 421,000 hectares

Land managed in partnership:

Gidgealpa – 20,172 hectares
 South Gap – 3,250 hectares
 Toondulya Conservation Area – 11,078 hectares





Message from the Chair

Jan Ferguson OAM

The changes to our climate and country mean that it may no longer be viable to attempt to restore nature to its original state. Instead, we aim to manage the factors within our control, to create resilient ecosystems in the current and future forecast environments. This approach requires careful balancing of our three primary factors: people, resources, and good science. I am proud of the efforts of our Board in its strategic direction, as well as the staff team in implementing and managing the on-ground actions over the past year.

Our annual Impact Reports are a valuable complement to the Financial Report, which is provided to Nature Foundation members and submitted to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). They demonstrate the tangible impacts of our actions, aligned with the goals outlined in our Strategic Plan: Towards 2030. The nature of the work we do means that there are many outputs and outcomes; however, we are focused on translating these into meaningful impacts that make a real difference to the landscapes, species and communities we aim to positively transform.

These impacts often take time to materialise, so while this Impact Report focuses on key activities from the past financial year, many of these are the result of the efforts of many people and the work undertaken over the years prior. We appreciate your support and understanding as we continue our long-term conservation efforts.

This past year saw the 15-year milestone of the acquisition of Witchelina Nature Reserve. Witchelina was the first nature reserve acquired and retained by Nature Foundation, marking a transition in the organisation to owning and managing land, which enabled us to ensure ongoing conservation actions and results.

Protecting land for the future is paramount to our cause. Our commitment to doubling our impact by 2030 through the Forever Nature Fund has seen further progress this year, with the innovative approach to collaborative conservation in the pastoral zone through the Toondulya Conservation Area, adjacent to Hiltaba Nature Reserve.

This partnership has been made possible through the State Government's policy changes, which recognise the need for progress, in addition to greater collective support for nature and the environment through the new Biodiversity Act.

The stability of our organisation and plans for the future are also reliant on a strong financial position. Our diverse income, including continued incredible support from donors and bequestors, enables us to explore and undertake new land growth opportunities confidently.

People are at the core of our mission, and I am deeply grateful for our growing engagement with members, supporters, volunteers, visitors, partners and Traditional Custodians over the past year. Your involvement and input are not only appreciated but also critical to our cause and success.

As you read this year's Impact Report, take pride in knowing that you had an important role to play in these results.



Message from the CEO

Alex Nankivell

We have long experienced a changing climate; however, this past year saw a distinct shift in seasons, with a prolonged, dry summer, followed by a late winter with some intense rain periods that impacted a range of planned works across the reserves. They say that change is the only constant. While we have become adept at working in a changing environment, I am continually inspired by the unwavering resilience of our team, which have contributed to the work and results you will read about in this year's Impact Report.

Each visit to one of our nature reserves fills me with a sense of responsibility and pride. I not only enjoy spending time in the natural landscape but also feel a deep commitment to the actions of our team and the long-term impacts of our ongoing conservation work.

My connection to Witchelina Nature Reserve began when Nature Foundation acquired Witchelina Station in 2010; I was filled with awe at the scale of the property and excitement at the opportunity to be part of its restoration. The La Niña event of 2010–11 was one of the strongest on record and Witchelina exploded with life. It was incredible to see the almost immediate recovery of the landscape and the diversity and abundance of wildlife. The recent 15th anniversary of its acquisition found me looking through my archives for early vegetation photos and marvelling at how far the immense landscape—and our organisation—has come.

Our 'small but mighty' team is well-supported by our volunteers, partners, and research and contractor network, and this annual update provides a strong summary of the immense impact this dedicated group of people has. Their work is not just significant, it's transformative. We really do punch above our weight, and I am incredibly proud to lead and support their important actions for biodiversity across South Australia and beyond.

Our ability to achieve so much across the widespread network of nature reserves and beyond is due to the strong internal systems, processes, frameworks and strategies that have been developed in line with our Strategic Plan: Towards 2030.

Considerable time and effort have been invested by the staff team and Board over the past year in developing and refining these robust systems and strategies to enable scaled growth into the future.

Our policies have also undergone a comprehensive review and update, with an emphasis on ensuring the safety of all those with whom we work.

It is incredibly rewarding to see our efforts and achievements reaching new people, with considerable growth in our organisation's awareness and reach over the past year. Our events have engaged more people, our supporter base is growing, and we are being regularly contacted regarding new opportunities.

It is an exciting time. I have been with Nature Foundation for almost 20 years now and have seen it go through several significant changes. I have felt the momentum build over the past few years in my role as CEO. Despite the continual challenges facing our environment, I am confident in our approach, which engages people, resources, and good science, that, together, we will continue to create positive change for nature. I want to express my gratitude for the important role each of you plays in our mission.

Thank you.



501,452 ha

Nine nature reserves across South Australia comprising over 500,000 hectares protected, managed and conserved, contributing to resilient ecosystems and positive biodiversity impact.

+34,500 ha

A further 34,500 hectares of land are protected and managed in partnership; providing additional valuable landscapes for native flora and fauna to thrive.



276

276 native species of flora and fauna were identified at Bullock Bridge Nature Reserve during the baseline biodiversity monitoring surveys, creating a valuable picture of the landscape to enable appropriate conservation management plans to be developed and implemented to positively impact the local ecosystems.

920

Since 2022, 920 Iron-grass seedlings have been planted at Tiliqua Nature Reserve, restoring this critically endangered ecological community and supporting habitat for three threatened fauna species.



**6,592
502**

6,592 supporters care for nature and the work we do, including 502 members.

+27.8% from FY2023



22

Habitat for 22 nationally threatened fauna species protected and actively managed.



3,500 hrs

\$176,750



93 volunteers recorded 3,500 hours of service, with a value of \$176,750, assisting us in advancing nature conservation in South Australia and beyond.

\$1,974,786

Since 2000, Nature Foundation has awarded \$1,974,786 in research grants to post-graduate students, academics, and the community to kickstart careers in research, supporting 464 students.



10,176



10,176 hours of audio was recorded on song meters across Bullock Bridge, Hiltaba and Witchelina nature reserves, contributing valuable data to a national innovative biodiversity monitoring project.



72

Six Kids on Country™ camps were held positively impacting 72 Aboriginal young people. Since its inception in 2016, 589 Aboriginal young people have participated in the junior ranger program.

1,078



15 events and activities were held over the past financial year, engaging 1,078 supporters and members in nature conservation.

engaging

Traditional custodian families, including members of the Kuyani and Adnyamathanha people came together on Country at Witchelina Nature Reserve, to connect and share experiences and stories with young people, and learning from Elders, as part of a Family on Country camp.



24 > 119 + 6%

An initial survey undertaken in 2003 at Para Woodlands Nature Reserve recorded 24 native bird species. The cumulative list now comprises more than 119 native species, of which 65 have national, state, and regional conservation ratings. A 395.8% increase.



3,040 goats,
814 feral cats
and 201 foxes
have been
removed from
Witchelina Nature
Reserve since
its acquisition in
2010, significantly
easing pressure
on the landscape
and its native
inhabitants.



3,040

814



201



Goal 1: Increasing areas of habitat are conserved and enhanced for future generations.



\$20M

Forever
Nature
Fund

12,514 ha

Land area increase
EOFY24/25

\$2,100,955

Financial figure
EOFY24/25

Forever Nature Fund

Nature Foundation's Forever Nature Fund has been established to raise capital for the purchase and management of areas of critical habitat prioritised using data-driven scientific and environmental assessment tools.

Our ambitious target is to raise \$20 million, doubling our impact to 1 million hectares by 2030 – in support of Australia's commitment to protect 30% of land and sea by 2030.

This past year has seen further progress toward this goal, thanks to a gift of land, a number of bequests, and generous donations, including major gifts, as well as several donors opting to make regular monthly contributions to the fund.

These efforts contribute not only to the Forever Nature Fund but to the future conservation, restoration, and protection of precious landscapes and species for future generations.

Thank you to all those who have joined in our quest. Your support, whether through a gift of land, a bequest, a generous one-time gift, or a regular monthly contribution, has made a real difference for the future of our native habitats and ecosystems across South Australia and beyond.

A milestone for Witchelina and Nature Foundation

June 2025 marked a significant milestone for Nature Foundation—15 years since transforming the former pastoral property, Witchelina Station, into a nature reserve and a shift in the organisation's direction, with the acquisition and retention of this first nature reserve, following 29 years of fundraising to contribute to land acquisition for the National Parks system.

Since its establishment in 1981, Nature Foundation (originally known as the National Parks Foundation of South Australia) has assisted in the acquisition of 24 national parks across Australia, significantly contributing to the growth of the National Reserve system. In 2010, the organisation transitioned to a model of retaining the acquired land for ongoing conservation management, and the 421,000-hectare Witchelina was a big, bold step in this new direction.

2010 marked the International Year of Biodiversity, and the acquisition of Witchelina was made possible through a Federal Government grant via the Caring for our Country program, in addition to five mining and petroleum companies, who recognised that the location would deliver a Significant Environmental Benefit. Their offset payments for the clearance of native vegetation in the arid lands became a crucial part of the transaction.

Witchelina remains one of the largest nature reserves in Australia, and its positive impacts have been vast and varied, including:

- Conservation actions, including destocking, grazing management and management of threatening processes such as tackling feral and invasive species, have seen the removal of 3,040 goats, 814 feral cats, and 201 foxes since 2010, significantly easing pressure on the landscape and its native inhabitants



- Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with Traditional Custodians from the Kuyani and Adnyamathanha peoples has supported the identification and protection of Aboriginal cultural sites and heritage across Witchelina.
- Through consultation with Kuyani Elder Beverley Patterson, the concept for the Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Program was born, and has now enabled over 500 Aboriginal young people to return to Country, learning valuable life skills, Aboriginal culture and conservation practices
- The nature reserve has witnessed a remarkable transformation since its acquisition, with the abundance of bird life notably increasing, a strong indicator of successful conservation efforts.
- Witchelina remains at the forefront of innovative conservation research, from both within and outside the organisation, and has been the site of several pioneering research projects.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication and support of Nature Foundation's passionate community of staff, members, supporters, contractors and partners, and the considerable contribution from Nature Foundation's volunteer network, who have spent immense time conserving, restoring, protecting and enjoying this powerful and precious part of Australia.

“

This is tough country, and it's used to weathering extremes, but without help, Witchelina's habitat and wildlife would have been in real trouble. Witchelina is a much-needed desert wildlife refuge in a unique part of Australia, and I applaud Nature Foundation for rolling up their sleeves to nurture it back to health”.

— Peter Garrett, in 2010 as Federal Environment Minister, at the launch of Witchelina Nature Reserve





Innovative collaboration to care for nature

Toondulya Conservation Area

Our target to double our impact to 1 million hectares of land protected by 2030 will require innovative approaches to achieve, and we are delighted to contribute to this goal through the protection of 11,078-hectares adjacent to Hiltaba Nature Reserve through a unique collaboration with neighbouring pastoralists, Nick and Susan Pritchard.

Kondoolka Station is immediately adjacent to the northwest of Nature Foundation's Hiltaba Nature Reserve, and station owners Nick and Susan Pritchard are strong supporters of the organisation's conservation work.

This good neighbour relationship has led to a unique conservation partnership that will protect the area within the Kondoolka pastoral lease, which borders Hiltaba, in perpetuity. Nature Foundation and the Pritchards will work together to plan, implement and manage the conservation work required for the area.

To be known as the Toondulya Conservation Area, named for the endemic Toondulya Wattle, *Acacia toondulya*, which is only known to exist within this unique region, the area will be important in providing additional habitat that will be permanently destocked and actively managed for biodiversity conservation. In time, the habitat condition will improve expanding important refugia for key species to adapt to future climate change impacts.

Toondulya Conservation Area is located within the Eucarro Land System. It incorporates the granite hills and formations of the westernmost section of the Gawler Ranges and features regionally significant acacia tall sparse shrublands and acacia and mallee low open woodlands. The area supports 6 EPBC nationally listed and 18 South Australian state listed species, including the endangered Short-tail Grasswren (*Amytornis merrotsyi*), the Midget Greenhood Orchid (*Pterostylis mutica*), the Gawler Ranges Greenhood Orchid (*Pterostylis ovata*), and the unique Rigid Spider-Orchid (*Caladenia tensa*). The area is also likely to contain the westernmost distribution of the Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby (*Petrogale xanthopus*), a key conservation species limited to the hills and rocky landscapes of the Gawler Ranges.

As recorded on the Atlas of Living Australia, the site comprises habitat for:

- 108 native bird species
- 12 native mammal species
- 32 native reptile species
- 228 native plant species.

We anticipate that additional species will be added to the preliminary species lists following the baseline biodiversity surveys that will occur.

The partnership will be supported over the next 10 years through funding from a Native Vegetation Council Restoration Grant, pending approvals from the SA Government to enter a Heritage Agreement over the area to provide ongoing protection.

We greatly appreciate the Pritchards' support and partnership in this innovative approach, which will provide significant biodiversity benefits for the region. We look forward to sharing further updates regarding Toondulya Conservation Area's progress and results over the coming years.



We need to find creative ways to ensure our unique native landscapes and species are protected for future generations. This partnership with the Pritchards is a wonderful example of how pastoral landholders and conservation organisations can work together to benefit the local environment and its unique biodiversity."

Alex Nankivell, CEO, Nature Foundation.



Reserve management framework

A systematic approach to delivering high-quality management outcomes across the nature reserve network has always been essential for the organisation.

The increase in the area of land managed, along with preparation for future expansion, has seen both capacity growth and a comprehensive review and update of the reserve management framework occur over this past year.

The framework is derived from the goals and objectives outlined in Nature Foundation's Strategic Plan: Towards 2030, considers all factors we are responsible for, and follows an Assess > Plan > Implement > Analyse > Share > Adapt approach to their on-ground delivery and measurement.

In practical terms, this enables us to gather on-site data and integrate it with our custom dashboards. These dashboards allow us to make real-time, evidence-based decisions that focus on achieving the organisation's goals and positive biodiversity impact.

The update of the reserve management framework has also led to a review and update of the existing management plan for each nature reserve, as well as a format that can be easily applied to new land acquisitions. This approach allows Nature Foundation to scale efficiently and effectively, delivering outcomes for nature.



WeedRemeed™ trial at Bullock Bridge Nature Reserve Tackling weeds with technology

Invasive species and weed management are not just local issues, but challenges that affect conservation work across Australia and the world.

By harnessing technology, we are developing innovative solutions that can assist with these challenges on a global scale.

Nature Foundation has partnered with the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions to participate in the national WeedRemeed™ project, utilising drones to capture images of native plant and weed species. The technology then uses advanced colour picking Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to identify and locate critical native plants and weed species.

In May 2025, Bullock Bridge Nature Reserve, located in southeast South Australia, 20km inland from Kingston SE, was used as one of the multiple trial sites nationally to trial the WeedRemeed™ software. The development of this cutting-edge technology is a significant step towards a cost-effective, national solution for large-scale weed management.

We are excited to be part of this valuable, practical research and eagerly anticipate the progress of this innovative solution.





NVC Restoration Grant provides protection in perpetuity

Watchalunga Nature Reserve

Watchalunga Nature Reserve was acquired by Nature Foundation in 2014, following a long period of use for cattle grazing.

Over the past 11 years, significant progress has been made in restoring the landscape. Its precious habitat supports local native species, including the Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren (*Stipiturus malachurus intermedius*), which is listed as Endangered under the national Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Act. Watchalunga is believed to be home to the largest stronghold of this sub-species. In addition, the nature reserve supports at least ten EPBC nationally-listed flora and fauna species, 15 South Australian state-listed species and one threatened ecological community. Conservation actions have primarily focused on revegetating native habitats through annual planting days, managing weeds and invasive species, particularly *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed) and removal of invasive fish species.

We are delighted to announce that we have secured substantial funding over the next 10 years, thanks to the Native Vegetation Council (NVC) Restoration Grant. This significant funding will not only ensure the continuity of our conservation efforts but also pave the way for a new native vegetation Heritage Agreement, providing further protection for the reserve.

Conservation activities will include ongoing revegetation, along with the control of key weed species to support the natural regeneration of native species. Additionally, a mobile irrigation system will be installed and a kangaroo exclusion fence constructed to increase the survival rate of planted seedlings. We will also be able to undertake actions to control feral predators, such as foxes and cats, to reduce the impact of predation on native birds, reptiles, and mammals.

The grant will also support the continued involvement of the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation in caring for Country and fostering cultural connection on the reserve.

Watchalunga's central location on the Fleurieu Peninsula and its annual planting days since 2017 have given many Nature Foundation members, volunteers, and supporters the opportunity to experience the reserve and contribute to its restoration. These activities have laid the groundwork for this significant funding boost, and we look forward to sharing the resulting actions and outcomes with you.

Goal 2: Nature science knowledge that leads to evidence-based decision making,

Science and Knowledge Strategy 2025–2030

The initial Science Strategy, introduced in 2018, outlined the governing principles and research priorities for the Science and Knowledge Program over the next five years. It also described the investment mechanisms and decision-making processes to enable South Australian ecological science to grow and develop, benefiting Nature Foundation, its nature reserves, and the broader community.

The next edition of the Science Strategy, developed over the past financial year, documents the strategic actions for 2025 to 2030 supporting Nature Foundation's ongoing commitment to the protection and restoration of the natural environment. These actions are also aligned with key global and national targets, as outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework¹ and Australia's Strategy for Nature 2024–2030². They focus on:

- Increasing the extent of critical habitats
- Improving habitat condition
- Increasing the intactness of landscapes (i.e. the "naturalness")
- Reducing species extinction risk.

Nature Foundation's Science and Knowledge Strategy 2025–2030 builds upon the achievements of the last 40 years. It adds value through extension and new initiatives and has been developed around five strategic pillars:

1. Ecosystem Characterisation

This pillar focuses on understanding the ecosystems and natural values that exist at our nature reserves.

- What ecosystem values are important at each reserve?
- How does this change?
- What drives this change?

We aim to gain new insights through ecosystem characterisation studies that help establish baseline datasets and develop long-term time series through regular, ongoing monitoring. These strategic activities will provide the information required to make evidence-based conservation management decisions that help restore balance to ecosystems and improve biodiversity.

2. Functional Ecosystem Restoration

This work focuses on rebuilding not only the physical components of ecosystems, such as habitats, but also the processes that support life, including nutrient cycling, energy flows, and species interactions. Understanding the complex relationships that underpin food web dynamics helps us prioritise efforts to restore critical ecosystem connections and functions that human activities, climate change, or species loss may have disrupted. This ensures that restoration efforts go beyond surface-level fixes, creating self-sustaining, resilient ecosystems that support biodiversity in the long term.

3. Threatened Species

Work in this area will increase understanding of the biology and ecology of the rare, vulnerable, and endangered species that inhabit Nature Foundation's reserves. It will focus not only on establishing the abundance and distribution of these species, but also on investigating population dynamics, and understanding movement patterns and habitat preferences, thereby promoting the conservation of threatened species in our nature reserves and across Australia.

4. Pest Species

The study of pest species benefits conservation by improving our understanding of their impacts on ecosystems and native species. Pest species—which include invasive feral and overabundant native species—can disrupt food webs, alter ecosystem processes, and cause habitat degradation. Knowledge of their behaviour, biology, and ecological roles, obtained through assessments of population dynamics, movement patterns, and habitat preferences, can identify the factors that allow pests to thrive and spread, and facilitate the development of targeted management approaches aimed at mitigating impacts.

5. Integrated Data Management

This aspect will ensure that we can seamlessly capture, process, analyse, and display all information required to meet the Foundation's strategic goals in a standardised manner across the nature reserve network and organisation, ensuring that resources are used most effectively to maximise positive outcomes for biodiversity.

The Science and Knowledge team will implement the 2025–2030 Science Strategy primarily through the Nature Foundation Biodiversity Monitoring Program, consisting of standardised surveys of vegetation, birds, reptiles, and mammals implemented across all Nature Foundation reserves each autumn and spring, combined with targeted, appropriately timed, species-specific surveys to capture important information on key threatened species.

We are looking forward to sharing more updates about the implementation and findings of the 2025–2030 Science Strategy.

References:

1: cbd.int/gbf/targets

2: dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/conservation/publications/australias-strategy-for-nature

Minagoona Dam, Witchelina Nature Reserve.



Assessing the long-term impacts of artificial watering points

Witchelina Nature Reserve

Since 2022, a team led by Professor Mike Letnic, Dr Adrian Fisher, Associate Professor Will Cornwell and Professor Heloise Gibb from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) have been conducting research projects focused on the management and functioning of ecosystems at Witchelina Nature Reserve.

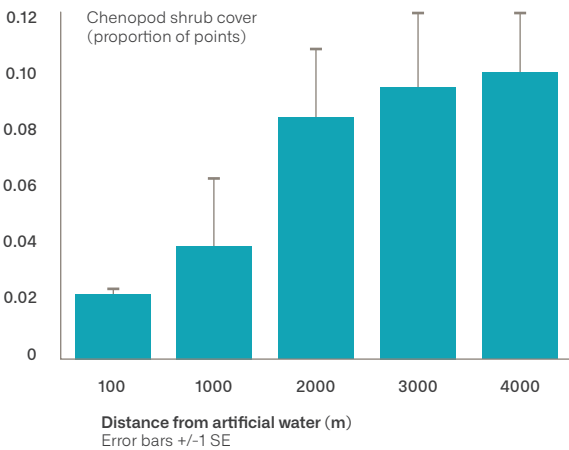
Through a grant awarded by the Australian Government’s Innovative Biodiversity Monitoring program, the team have been using remote sensing and song meters to investigate the legacy effects that artificial water points are having on vegetation and birds on Witchelina. Like many arid-zone conservation reserves, Witchelina was once a pastoral station used to graze sheep and cattle. The landscape is dotted with dams and bores established by pastoralists to provide water for livestock. These artificial water points were focal points for the activity of sheep. Remote sensing imagery shows that the soils and vegetation in the immediate vicinity of artificial water points were highly degraded and had low vegetation cover when Nature Foundation acquired Witchelina in 2010.

Remote sensing imagery taken in 2024 indicates that a legacy effect of long-term grazing persists on the vegetation. Since its acquisition and transition to a nature reserve in 2010, there has been some recovery of vegetation around the artificial water points; however, a pattern still exists where vegetation cover increases with increasing distance from the artificial water points.

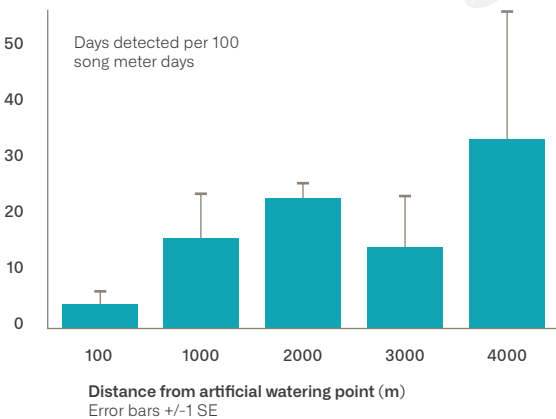
In 2024, the team investigated the legacy effects of grazing around artificial water points on the vegetation and birds of the stony plains. To do this, they deployed 48 song meters at varying distances away from four artificial water points to measure the calling activity of birds and made estimates of vegetation cover in the vicinity of the song meters. The song meters were programmed to record ambient sound for two hours either side of sunrise and sunset for 66 days. Analysis of more than 12,000 hours of recordings showed that some birds, such as Banded Lapwings (*Vanellus tricolor*) and Inland Dotterels (*Charadrius australis*) were more active in areas near old watering points with large expanses of bare ground. Conversely, Thick-billed Grasswrens (*Amytornis modestus*) and Rufous Fieldwrens (*Calamanthus campestris*) were more active in areas more than a kilometre away from old watering points with high cover of Chenopod shrubs such as Black Bluebush (*Maireana pyramidata*) and Bluebush (*Maireana sedifolia*).

These results demonstrate the recovery of vegetation on Witchelina since its acquisition in 2010. However, they also demonstrate that the legacy effects of livestock grazing on arid landscapes can persist long after livestock are removed, due to the slow recovery of long-lived Chenopod shrubs in these landscapes, resulting from germination and growth restrictions following infrequent rainfall events. The persistence of these legacy effects of livestock grazing is unknown; however, these results also indicate the benefits of strategic decommissioning of artificial water points in re-establishing the balance across the landscape.

Chenopod shrub cover increased with increasing distance away from water.



Thick-billed Grasswren calling activity increased with increasing distance away from water





Analysing the sounds of nature

Innovative Biodiversity Monitoring Project Update

This year, we trialled a new way of listening to the bush, deploying song meters and using artificial intelligence to identify birds from their calls.

Over the years, we have primarily relied on experienced bird watchers to survey sites a few times a year; however, we can now augment this with the use of small recording devices at key habitats across our nature reserves. These units collect thousands of hours of bird chorus at dawn and dusk.

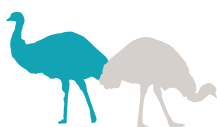
Over the past year, Nature Foundation, in collaboration with UNSW and other stakeholders, has made significant strides in the federally funded Innovative Biodiversity Monitoring project. This initiative aims to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of processing and analysing audio biodiversity data by developing a streamlined data flow process for large-scale monitoring programs in remote Australia. We deployed the song meters at Witchelina, Hiltaba, and Bullock Bridge Nature Reserves.

Recordings are analysed by AI models trained to recognise the calls of different species, allowing us to quickly and accurately build a picture of which birds were present, how often they were calling, and how this changes through the seasons.

Song meters were located at existing bird survey sites, allowing the Science and Knowledge team to use historical bird survey data to assist in calibrating and validating audio monitoring data, and identifying expected detections, thereby expediting the development of audio data processing and analysis workflows. Volunteers from Birds SA have conducted regular bird surveys at Witchelina and Hiltaba since their acquisition, and Bullock Bridge benefactor Professor Hugh Possingham has been surveying birds in the area for over 40 years.

The trial has taught us many valuable lessons so far; the song meter recordings give us a rich and detailed picture of how the chorus of birds changes throughout the year. It will also enable us to detect shifts in the timing and frequency of when some species call, which could be linked to larger trends in climate change. However, we have also found that many of the rarer and shyer birds are not being detected on the song meters, demonstrating that our dedicated bird watchers will always be critical for detecting the full diversity of species at any site.

As the project continues, it holds the potential to revolutionise the usefulness of audio data in biodiversity monitoring and provide a valuable complement to traditional survey methods.





Understanding our Pink Cockatoo population

Hiltaba Nature Reserve

Pink Cockatoos (*Lophochroa leadbeateri*) are listed as endangered under the national Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act (1999).

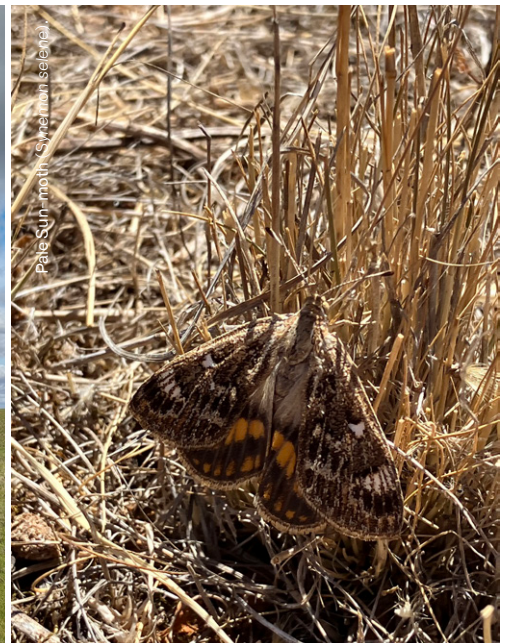
They face significant threats from the loss and degradation of their woodland habitat due to land clearing and agricultural expansion. These birds rely on specific tree hollows in mature eucalyptus and cypress pines for nesting and inhabit areas with mulga, mallee, callitris, casuarina, and eucalypt species, often near water sources, as they require water regularly. Pink Cockatoos are granivores, feeding on seeds from various plants, including grasses, shrubs, and trees, with a particular fondness for seeds from cypress pine and acacia. They also consume roots, bulbs, and insect larvae.

Research conducted at Hiltaba Nature Reserve over the past year aims to improve the understanding of the population dynamics, movement patterns, and habitat preferences of this species, thereby enhancing its conservation outcomes.

Nature Foundation staff have begun recording all Pink Cockatoo sightings across Hiltaba Nature Reserve by conducting fortnightly surveys in an effort to build a better understanding of the local population and how it utilises the habitat. The frequency of records around small water sources during the hot summer period may indicate the importance of water in the landscape for the species.

Given the negative grazing impacts that artificial water sources promote in attracting feral and overabundant native species, such as goats and kangaroos, we have decided to trial dedicated bird-only watering stations that are elevated above the ground to support the local Pink Cockatoo population during hot, dry periods. Remote cameras will monitor each watering station, positioned in different directions at the trough, and set to record with time-lapse functionality. AI image processing software will conduct the initial image analysis, which the Science and Knowledge team will then verify. This information will help us better understand the timing and frequency of Pink Cockatoo visits to small water sources and their associated habitats, providing new insights into the species' behaviour that will assist with future planning for conservation and land management.

The Letcombe Foundation will fund the construction of these bird-only watering stations.



Iron-grass restoration key to conserving threatened species

Tiliqua Nature Reserve

The Iron-grass Natural Temperate Grassland of South Australia is listed nationally as a critically endangered ecological community under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act (1999).

The spiky, tussock-like appearance of Iron-grass and its long lifespan make it a significant habitat feature in native grasslands. Iron-grass (*Lomandra multiflora* ssp. *Dura*, *Lomandra densiflora* and *Lomandra effusa*) is a crucial element in the restoration of Tiliqua Nature Reserve's native grassland, where its deep root system helps to stabilise the soil. The plants themselves act as seed traps, which can support higher floral biodiversity.

This past year saw the further protection of the 85-hectare Tiliqua Nature Reserve, located near Burra in South Australia's mid-north, through a Native Vegetation Heritage Agreement. The reserve now supports three threatened species that share a preference for this Iron-grass habitat.

The Flinders Ranges worm-lizard (*Aprasia pseudopulchella*) is a legless lizard endemic to South Australia and listed as Vulnerable under the national EPBC Act. The species was recorded by Nature Foundation's Science and Knowledge Project Officer, Dr Lucy Clive, while she was undertaking her PhD at Tiliqua Nature Reserve in 2016. Very little is known about the cryptic species, and its existence on the reserve warrants further investigation.

The Pale Sun-moth (*Synemon selene*), was last recorded in South Australia in 1948 and considered locally extinct, before its rediscovery in 2018 by SA Museum staff near Peterborough, in South Australia's mid-north. Pale Sun-moths are listed as endangered in Victoria but have no conservation status in South Australia, likely due to a lack of data. Subject matter experts widely regard them as critically endangered in South Australia. This year, the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) has conducted extensive surveys in collaboration with expert entomologists to identify new colonies of Pale Sun-moths and gain a better understanding of the species' distribution and abundance. In March 2025, two sightings of the Pale Sun-moth were recorded at Tiliqua during management and research activities on the site.

These species join the resident population of endangered Pygmy Bluetongue lizards (*Tiliqua adelaidensis*), which call Tiliqua home, and will become part of our ongoing management and monitoring programs.



Providing a refuge for native birds

Para Woodlands Nature Reserve

Para Woodlands Nature Reserve is a 500-hectare area of former farming land that was bequeathed to Nature Foundation and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) in 2003 for shared management by the late Mrs Elizabeth Law-Smith OAM and her husband David.

The farm, once used for cropping and grazing, also retained areas of remnant vegetation. Over the years, we have witnessed a remarkable transformation, with revegetation efforts covering over 200 hectares. This restoration success story highlights the planting of over 120,000 native plants and more than 1,000 kilograms of native grass seeds.

The 2024/2025 period was the driest recorded at Para Woodlands since the establishment of the nature reserve, severely impacting restoration efforts. The lack of rainfall hindered further revegetation, and so the focus shifted to supporting and maintaining the previous revegetation, along with strategic and opportunistic weed control.

Artificial watering points were provided for birds, as species like the nationally Vulnerable Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*) need to drink several times throughout the day. These and other native species were recorded using the watering points throughout the year, along with continued use of the remnant vegetation and revegetated areas.

The August 2024 bird survey recorded a new species not previously observed on the reserve, a White-throated Gerygone (*Gerygone olivacea olivacea*), listed as Rare in South Australia. This and some other species detected last year (such as Pallid Cuckoo, *Cacomantis pallidus* and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, *Acanthagenys rufogularis*) are likely visitors, stopping by during migration or driven out of their normal range by the dry conditions, and finding refuge on the reserve.

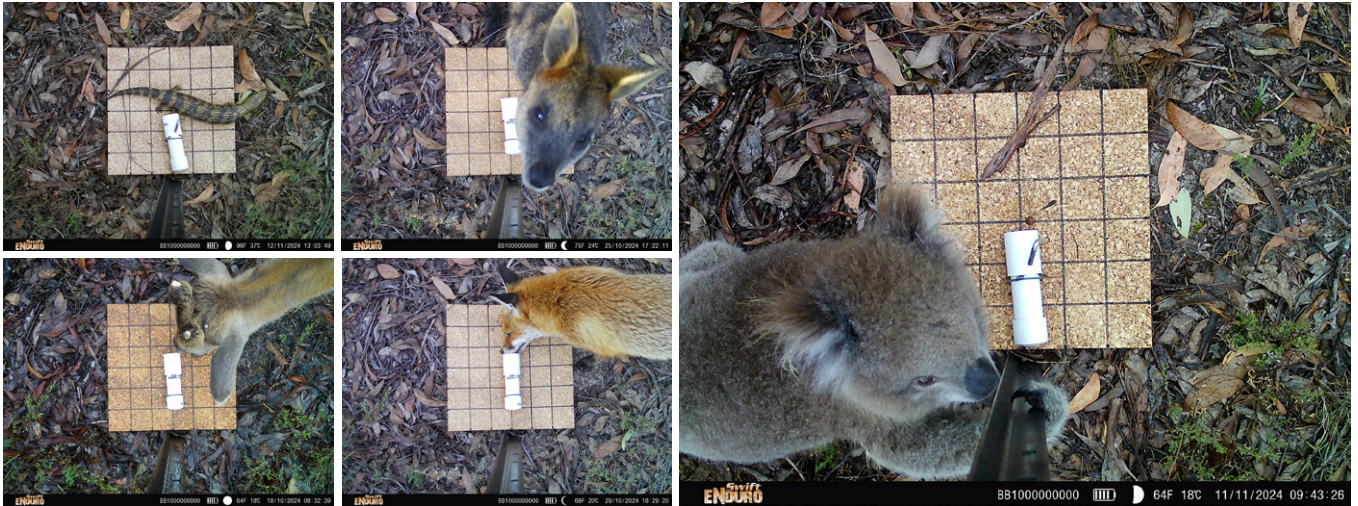
An initial survey undertaken in 2003 recorded 24 native bird species at Para Woodlands. The cumulative list now comprises more than 119 species, of which 65 have national, state, and regional conservation ratings. This significant increase in bird diversity is a clear indication of the positive outcomes of our conservation efforts and the resilience of this restored ecosystem.



Female Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*).



Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*).



Measuring baseline biodiversity

Bullock Bridge Nature Reserve

An essential first step in developing strategic conservation management plans for any new nature reserve is undertaking baseline biological surveys. These surveys enable us to make informed, evidence-based conservation management recommendations.

Bullock Bridge Nature Reserve—also known locally as Bullocky Bridge—was acquired in early 2024. The 203-hectare area boasts rich botanical diversity, supporting a wealth of native birds, mammals, and reptiles. Before planning for long-term management, we needed to undertake a biodiversity inventory of the nature reserve to determine what species inhabit the region and establish a baseline against which we can measure the impacts of future management outcomes.

This survey enabled us to roll out one of the first Nature Foundation Biodiversity Monitoring Program protocols as developed by the Science and Knowledge team as part of the 2025 Science and Knowledge Strategy, featuring 10 sites across the reserve to monitor activity using:

- Vegetation surveys
- Regular bird surveys
- Reptile monitoring using the “tile flip” method
- Remote cameras, forward- and downward-facing.

As the initial baseline survey for this reserve, the monitoring also involved Pitfall and Elliot traps to detect small mammals, as well as audio monitoring song meters as part of the UNSW Innovative Biodiversity Monitoring project.

Following the nine-month monitoring period, the following detections were collated:

- 180 native plant species were recorded on the nature reserve. While no national or state-significant flora species were recorded, several species hold a regional rating, including Purplish Beard-orchid (*Calochilus robertsonii*), Rare in the south-east, Heart-lip Spider Orchid (*Caladenia cardiochila*) and Swamp Goodenia (*Goodenia humilis*), both Vulnerable in the south-east.
- 28 weed species were recorded, including significant weeds: Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides* ssp. *asparagoides*) and Coastal Wattle (*Acacia longifolia* ssp. *sophorae*).

- 13 species of mammal were captured, heard and/or observed during the biological survey, including 11 native species and two exotic species (European Rabbit and one Fallow Deer). The native species included Little Pygmy Possum (*Cercartetus nanus*), Western Pygmy Possum (*Cercartetus concinnus*), Sugar Glider (*Petaurus brevipes*), Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) and Common Brush-tailed Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*).
- 12 species of reptile were recorded, including Stumpy Lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and Eastern Brown Snake (*Pseudonaja textilis*).
- 73 bird species were observed and/or heard. Species of interest (and/or declining species) included Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), Painted Button-quail (*Turnix varius*), Elegant Parrot (*Neophema elegans*), Beautiful Firetail (*Stagonopleura bella*) and Southern Scrub-robin (*Drymodes brunneopygia*).

Baseline biodiversity monitoring supports our strategic objective of expanding ecological knowledge to support sustainable ecosystems, and our commitment to evidence-based decision-making when developing conservation management plans. These findings have provided valuable outcomes to guide and prioritise the next stage of reserve management activities, with a focus on managing pest species.

The baseline monitoring has also established standard sites and processes, from which ongoing bi-annual monitoring can now occur, allowing us to continue developing our understanding of the nature reserve and the longterm impacts of management actions.

This project is supported by the Limestone Coast Landscape Board’s Grassroots Grants program, and is funded by the regional landscape levy.

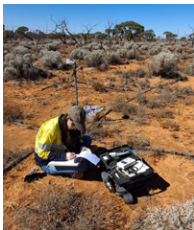
Student research grants 2025

High quality nature science underpins all our efforts to manage our unique biodiversity for future generations sustainably, and an essential aspect of this is offering research grants for university students, funded by donations from our generous supporters.

Since 2000, Nature Foundation has awarded \$1,974,786 in research grants to post-graduate students, academics, and the community to kickstart careers in research, supporting 464 students. This year five student research grants were awarded in the March 2025 round, including a new grant sponsored by benefactor Lynnette Aplin, to the value of \$5,000.

Jaclyn Wilmot Grant Start Grants: Honours

Bachelor of Science (Honours)
(Ecology and Evolutionary Biology),
University of Adelaide



To Seed or Not to Seed: can nitrogen addition improve the fecundity of Pearl Bluebush (Maireana sedifolia) in the

Australian arid lands?

Jaclyn's project will be conducted within the Yellabinna Regional Reserve surrounding the Jacinth-Ambrosia mine site, approximately 200km northwest of Ceduna and will investigate whether soil nitrogen deficiency could be the main culprit limiting Maireana sedifolia (Pearl Bluebush) fertility and growth, and how nitrogen addition via facilitation could be a potential solution for this problem.

Raphael Clement Roy and Marjory Edwards Scholarship

PhD in Marine Ecology,
Edith Cowan University WA



Overcoming barriers to seagrass restoration

Raphael's research investigates a remarkable natural

Posidonia recovery in South Australia, likely driven by seed dispersal. Using genetic analysis and hydrodynamic modelling, Raphael aims to understand the ecological drivers of the recovery and connectivity between populations.

Kathryn Bugler Grand Starts Grants: PhD

PhD, University of Adelaide



Roos on the move: Understanding kangaroo movement for improved conservation

Kathryn's project involves deploying

60 GPS/accelerometer collars on Red Kangaroos (*Osphranter rufus*) to address applied ecological and management questions relating to their movement and behaviour.

Natarsha McPherson Lynette Aplin 'Knowledge in Science' Research Grant

PhD in Ecology, University of Adelaide



Spatiotemporal patterns of semi-fossorial mammals in rangeland Australia: A case study of the wombat and rabbit

using remote sensing and ecological modelling

Natarsha's project will integrate remote satellite digitisation, field validation, and ecological modelling to establish detailed occurrence data, assess burrowing impact and ecological interactions (abiotic and interspecific), and predict range shifts under environmental change.

Hannah McKennall Nature Foundation Scientific Expedition Foundation RL & GK Willing Grant

Bachelor of Science (Honours) (Animal Behaviour), Flinders University



Distribution, habitat use and behaviour of Rakali (Hydromys Chrysogaster) across locations of varying human disturbance in

the Goolwa and associated tributaries catchment

Hannah's project will investigate the presence of the native Australian water rat, Rakali (*Hydromys chrysogaster*), its habitat preference, and behaviour in multiple locations of varying human disturbance in the Goolwa region of South Australia. Study locations include Watchalunga Nature Reserve, the Finniss River tributary (mouth), Currency Creek tributary (mouth), and Goolwa township.



**We wish all our 2025
grant recipients well
with their research.**

Goal 3: Nature is better understood and valued.



Connecting to culture and conservation

Kids on Country

Nature Foundation's Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Program continues to deliver culturally grounded, nature-based experiences that support Aboriginal young people in connecting deeply with culture, community, and Country.

The past year has seen strong engagement, cultural growth, and a deepening focus on conservation and land stewardship.

Over the 2024/2025 financial year:

- Six Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Programs were successfully delivered, while two needed to be cancelled due to extreme weather and road closures.
- 72 Aboriginal young people across regional and remote South Australia participated in the immersive Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Program.
- A new Cultural Facilitator was welcomed to the program—John John Solar—a Kuyani/Adnyamathanha man, whose extensive experience in ranger work and social and emotional wellbeing has significantly enriched the program. John John has contributed further cultural depth, practical knowledge, and strong mentorship to support the development of youth participants.
- New cultural and conservation learning activities were developed, including a traditional fire knowledge workshop, where students engaged in supervised, hands-on learning, focused on the cultural significance and responsible use of fire. Led by experienced cultural educators, activities included demonstrations and guided practice with flint and steel, ferro rods, and traditional fire-starting techniques. Emphasis was placed on fire safety, respect for cultural protocols, and the role of fire in ecological care and community life.

Since its inception in 2016, 49 Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Programs have been delivered in high schools across South Australia, engaging 589 Aboriginal young people in hands-on learning grounded in cultural knowledge and environmental conservation.

Kids on Country documentary

In 2024, Walkley Award-winning journalist and filmmaker Daniel Clarke joined the Kids on Country™ team, along with students and teachers from Le Fevre High School, to document a five-day camp at Witchelina Nature Reserve in remote northern South Australia.

The resulting film features insights from Kuyani/Adnyamathanha Elder Beverley Patterson and captures the journey of a group of Aboriginal young people participating in this life-changing program.

The film premiered in February 2025, at a private screening at the Odeon Star Cinema in Semaphore, to an excited audience. Karla Grant, presenter, producer, and journalist for SBS's national Indigenous current affairs program *Living Black*, hosted the event.

We were proud to have the students and teachers from Le Fevre High School who feature in the documentary, along with their families attend the premiere, as well as senior Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community members, Directors of the Nature Foundation Board, members of the Aboriginal Advisory Group, Nature Foundation staff including the Kids on Country™ team, donors, corporate partners and supporters of the Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Program, industry representatives and other supporters including the Honorable Susan Close MP, Deputy Premier for South Australia and State Member for Port Adelaide, the Honourable Mike Rann, former Premier for South Australia and Chair of the South Australian Film Corporation, and Claire Boan, Mayor of the City of Port Adelaide Enfield.

The Kids on Country documentary was acquired by NITV for three years, providing a national audience through NITV and SBS On Demand, to share the story of this incredible program and its profound impact on Aboriginal young people. We are deeply grateful to the many people who have supported the Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Program over the years and look forward to the ripple effect that this opportunity may provide.





Landmark Biodiversity Act passed in South Australia

In June 2025 the South Australian Government passed a landmark new Biodiversity Act, a key piece of legislation that will protect native flora, fauna, and ecosystems and conserve, restore, and enhance biodiversity.

The new Biodiversity Act 2025 is the first Australian environment law in years to be developed from the ground up, consolidating biodiversity protections that were previously spread across multiple legislation. Nature Foundation contributed feedback during its development and applauds the Department for Environment and Water's commitment to consultation with a variety of key stakeholders throughout the process. Nature Foundation members play a vital role in demonstrating their commitment to nature and the environment, which supports our contributions to government policy.

Key highlights from the Act include:

- Stronger native vegetation laws
- Tougher penalties for harming wildlife and illegal clearance of native habitat
- Recognition of Aboriginal South Australians and the role that they play in caring for Country
- New protections for critical habitats and threatened ecological communities
- A general duty for all South Australians to protect biodiversity
- A nationally consistent process to recognise and list threatened species

Different parts of the Act will be proclaimed gradually, with complete implementation expected to take around two years. Amendments to other legislation—including the repeal of the Native Vegetation Act 1991—will also come into effect gradually, aligned with the commencement of the corresponding parts of the Biodiversity Act.

With our aim to conserve the natural habitat of South Australia and beyond for future generations, these new laws are a beacon of hope for our native landscapes, their inhabitants, and everyone who uses, enjoys and loves nature. Nature Foundation commends the efforts of the South Australian Government and all those involved in the process and looks forward to its roll out and the positive impact it will have on our local biodiversity.

Partnering for nature

One of our key objectives is to involve more people and communities in nature conservation. This involves a diverse range of partnerships and collaborations with like-minded groups and individuals, ensuring that everyone has a role to play in strengthening the positive impact we can collectively have on nature conservation, both locally and nationally.

These partnerships and collaborations take a range of forms, from research to sponsorship and membership, as well as other forms of support.

Over the past year, we are proud to have partnered and collaborated with a number of organisations to enhance nature conservation and positive biodiversity impact, including:

Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association

ANU Regent Parrot Ecology

Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA)

Birds SA

Centre for Invasive Species Solutions

Department for Environment and Water

Flinders University

Friends of Parks and Nature South Australia

Gawler Ranges Aboriginal Corporation

GreenCollar

Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation

Kuyani Aboriginal Corporation

Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board

Nature Festival SA

Nature Glenelg Trust

Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation

Northern and Yorke Landscape Board

Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard Recovery Team

ReBird the Ranges

Regent Parrot Recovery Team

SA Arid Lands Landscape Board

SA Nature Alliance

Second Nature Conservancy

University of NSW

Goal 4: Engaged communities that support resilient habitats.

Engaging with our members and supporters

The past year has been another period of growth and engagement with our members and supporters.

A focus over the past few years on raising awareness and the organisation's profile is yielding results, with a wave of new conservationists joining our long-term member and supporter base. Their involvement has significantly expanded our reach and impact, contributing to the success of our conservation efforts.

'Supporters' is the term used to encompass those who show support for Nature Foundation in a variety of ways, including members, donors and email subscribers. This passionate community has demonstrated its eagerness to learn about our work and results through regular updates and has responded positively to our efforts to reduce our environmental and financial resource use, through favouring digital information delivery and engagement where possible. These mediums have also attracted new supporters, with significant increases in email subscribers and social media followers.



Excellent presentation and talks, clear concise and positive. Lovely catering and venue which allowed to mingle and converse in ample space."

– *Conservation Conversations*

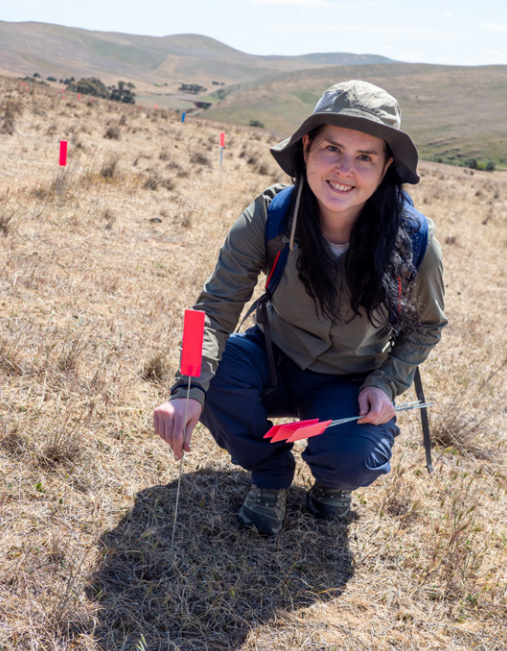


Members and supporters demonstrated their desire to get involved through participation in a range of events, which also provided opportunities to reach and engage with new people keen to support our cause.

A variety of events were held over the year, including:

- Opportunities to get hands-on with the always popular Watchalunga Planting Day to celebrate National Tree Day in July, and Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard Crawl in October.
- Conservation Conversations was held in August to a packed house and featured vibrant updates from special guest speakers Professor Hugh Possingham, Professor Mike Letnic, and 2024 Young South Australian of the Year, Tiahni Adamson.
- In September, Nature Foundation staff hosted a group of members for a multi-day tour to visit the two southeast nature reserves-Geegeela and Bullock Bridge.
- The Nature's Foundations 3 exhibition and launch provided an opportunity to experience artworks inspired by Witchelina and Hiltaba Nature Reserves through the Artist Residency Program.
- The second year of Birds & Bingo sold out again as part of our involvement with the Nature Festival.
- We were treated to a beautiful late-spring evening at Payneham Bowling Club for our end-of-year Member and Supporter Thank You event.
- 2025 started strong with the premiere and public screenings of the Kids on Country documentary, attracting almost 300 guests.
- The Science and Knowledge team commenced their bi-monthly webinar series in June, with the first edition introducing and showcasing the ReBird the Ranges initiative and case studies from our Para Woodlands and Watchalunga nature reserves.

This diverse range of events and activities provided a multitude of ways to get involved, learn, and socialise, sparking excitement and engagement among our members and supporters, forming stronger bonds with our environment and each other.



Volunteers for nature

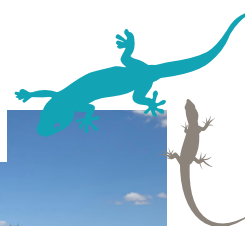
The past financial year saw the first full year for the new Volunteer Program since its launch in October 2023.

The program has attracted a high level of interest from people keen to make a difference, with 93 volunteers recording 3,500 hours of service, including the time of our volunteer Board Directors. This time equates to \$176,750 of donated time, which has significantly supported the actions and goals of Nature Foundation.

Conservation and Nature Reserve Support remain the two most highly serviced activity categories, with volunteers undertaking critical actions on the reserves. Volunteers have also provided valuable support with infrastructure projects, administrative and data-related activities in the office, and assisting the staff team at events, such as the Kids on Country documentary premiere.

A focus over the past year has been arranging 'come and try' activities and providing specialised training to volunteers who can commit to ongoing support for particular conservation and science-related tasks. One such activity was a Regent Parrot surveying opportunity at Murbpook Nature Reserve, where volunteers shadowed our Science and Knowledge team members as they undertook the activity. Some of our conservation activities, such as surveying, have specific requirements, and these 'come and try' opportunities allow volunteers to determine whether the activity is a good fit for their skills and temperament. For example, with bird surveying, participants require strong attention to detail and the ability to spend long periods of time sitting, observing and documenting the species and specific behaviours of different birds.

It has been wonderful to see the growth in not only the pool of volunteers but also their participation, passion, engagement, skills development, and the immense contributions they are making towards our combined positive impact on nature.



Family on Country camp at Witchelina

In March 2025, our Kids on Country team hosted a Family on Country camp at Witchelina Nature Reserve, providing the opportunity for over 40 of Witchelina's Traditional Custodians of multiple generations to spend time on Country.

The camp began with Welcome to Country from Kuyani/Adnyamathanha Elder Beverley Patterson, included tours and walks around the nature reserve, participation in some of the Kids on Country activities and spending time connecting and yarning around the campfire.

We are grateful for the support of Traditional Custodians in contributing their traditional ecological knowledge to our conservation practices, and the opportunity for their continued connection to Country and culture.

This Family on Country camp was made possible thanks to funding from the Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal.

* Based on the Volunteering SA&NT volunteering dollar replacement hourly rate value figure for South Australia of \$50.50 per hour.



Aboriginal Advisory Group deepens engagement with Nature Foundation

The Aboriginal Advisory Group was established in early 2024 to provide valuable support, strategic advice and guidance for the delivery and future growth of the Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Program. Members represent various Aboriginal Traditional Custodian groups from across South Australia, offering diverse perspectives to ensure the program continues to support a range of stakeholders.

The Aboriginal Advisory Group met in April 2025 to discuss broadening their involvement with Nature Foundation. While their support for the Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Program remains a focus, there was a collective agreement among members to extend their support across the organisation.

Nature Foundation has committed to developing an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy, and the input of the Aboriginal Advisory Group will offer a critical contribution to how Nature Foundation engages and collaborates with Aboriginal people in land management planning, on-ground conservation activities on nature reserves, volunteering, and its broader community outreach activities.

The representatives from the group can provide valuable support in ensuring that sites of cultural significance on the nature reserves are managed sensitively, in consultation with and in conformance with the directions of Traditional Custodians. They may also contribute cultural and ecological knowledge to conservation and land management plans and activities.

Nature Foundation acknowledges and respects the deep spiritual attachment and care for Country that Aboriginal people have had for thousands of years and continue to have today. We greatly value our relationships with Traditional Custodians and to further developing these.



Our visit to Hiltaba Nature Reserve sparked a deep sense of wonder in our Reception and Year 1 students. From learning about the rich natural and cultural history of the land to discovering how conservation efforts are helping protect it for future generations. It was a powerful reminder that even our youngest learners can connect with and care for our environment."

Calise, Miltaburra Area School teacher.



Inspiring future generations

Nature Reserve Visitation

Over the years, Nature Foundation has welcomed visitors to its nature reserves in various capacities, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to engaging people in conservation and inspiring them to connect with and conserve natural habitats.

Our visitors come in various forms, including members, donors, supporters, volunteers, researchers, partners, contractors, and those who utilise the accommodation, walking, and nature drive opportunities at Hiltaba and Witchelina Nature Reserves.

In June 2025, during Reconciliation Week, we welcomed a group of young students from nearby Miltaburra Area School at Wirrulla, after their teacher enquired about the opportunity to undertake a day trip excursion to Hiltaba Nature Reserve. The students enjoyed a tour of the reserve, led by Conservation Land Manager Paul Drummond, who provided background information on the pastoral history of Hiltaba and an overview of our conservation activities and results. Cherie Rolfe, representative for the Gawler Ranges Aboriginal Corporation (GRAC) and a member of the Nature Foundation Aboriginal Advisory Group, played a crucial role in sharing some Aboriginal cultural history and ongoing connections to the land.

It was an educational and engaging day, and an inspiring opportunity to share this precious landscape and its progress with a new generation.

Goal 5: An inspirational organisation that is financially secure and achieves operational excellence.

Financial Position summary

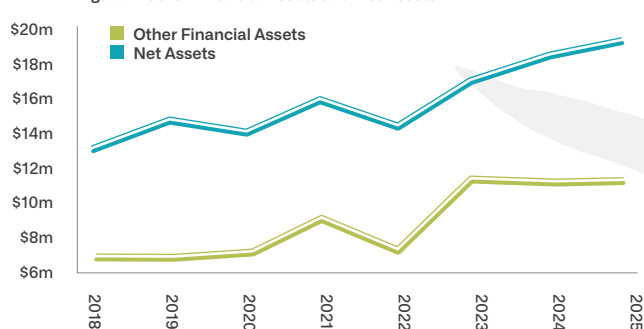
Nature Foundation has maintained a strong and resilient financial position over the long term despite the economic uncertainty, irregular project based income and market volatility linked to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Since 2018, Nature Foundation has achieved an average annual net result of \$758,603 (Figure 1), which contributed to a 46% growth in net assets, and a 65% increase in other financial assets (shares) (Figure 2). These results demonstrate a sustained improvement in the financial health of the organisation, allowing us to confidently plan for the future.

Figure 1. Income, Expenses and Net Result



Figure 2. Other Financial Assets and Net Assets



Board Update

The Board of Volunteer Directors at Nature Foundation play a crucial role in governance and strategic decision-making and delivered another year of positive impact for nature conservation in South Australia and beyond.

A new initiative introduced this year by the Chair, Jan Ferguson OAM, was the commencement of sending a Board Communiqué email summary to members following each quarterly Board meeting, outlining key discussion points and outcomes from the meeting. Over the past year these communiqués have included key highlights from Program area reports, and strategic and organisational updates including the annual insurance review and policy updates.

The Annual General Meeting was held in November 2024 and saw three existing Board Directors come to the end of their term: Jan Ferguson OAM, Douglas Ransom and Professor Philip Weinstein. All three were re-nominated and stood unopposed and so were re-elected for another three-year term. At the Board meeting following the AGM, Jan Ferguson OAM was re-elected as Chair, and Greg Limbert was elected as Deputy Chair.

This past year also saw the departure of two Board Directors, with the unexpected passing of Phil Cole in January 2025, and the resignation of Professor Philip Weinstein in March 2025, following two terms of service. Their contributions to the Board and Nature Foundation are greatly valued.



Vale **Phil Cole**

This year we have mourned the peaceful yet unexpected passing of Phil Cole, a long-term Nature Foundation supporter, member, volunteer, and Board Director.

Phil's contributions to Nature Foundation began following his retirement from State and Commonwealth public service where he significantly advanced water and salinity management, particularly in the context of the River Murray. He initially served on the Water for Nature Committee, where his expertise as a water resources specialist was invaluable. His significant contributions at Witchelina as a volunteer included buffel grass management and conducting raptor and bird surveys.

Phil joined the Nature Foundation Board as a Director in 2022 and was a highly respected and valued member. He actively participated in our Volunteer Program, providing support at various activities and regularly attending Nature Foundation events and social occasions.

Phil's passing is a profound loss for the Foundation. His passion, hands-on approach, and embodiment of our values made him a truly exceptional conservationist and Director. His significant contributions towards our mission will be deeply missed.



Farewell Professor **Philip Weinstein**

Professor Philip Weinstein, whose impactful tenure has left an indelible mark on the Nature Foundation, stepped down from the Board after six years as Deputy Chair.

Professor Philip Weinstein was elected to the Nature Foundation Board and to the role of Deputy Chair in 2018. Phil played a pivotal role in shifting the organisation's science strategy from process-focused to outcomes-focused, prioritising quantifiable biodiversity gains. This is a crucial pillar of our work as we strive to maximise our impact with our available resources.

Phil played a vital role in launching several significant scientific initiatives, including the first Nature Foundation Science Strategy, a major Australian Research Council grant in collaboration with the University of New South Wales to address overgrazing management, establishing a partnership with Yundi Nature Conservancy to develop more cost-effective biodiversity assessment methods using remote sensing, and realigning our research investment with our organisational knowledge needs has been invaluable.

Phil's expertise as a leading scientist and his exceptionally valuable contribution as Director has left an indelible mark on Nature Foundation.



Australia's first restoration natural burial ground

With our vision to inspire people to connect with and conserve the natural habitat of South Australia and beyond for future generations, the unique opportunity to be involved with Australia's first restoration natural burial ground is an exciting project.

A few years ago, the Natural Burial Ground Trust of Australia approached Nature Foundation to explore the opportunity to partner with them to establish Australia's first restoration natural burial ground. While many prefer not to think about death until they must, death is a part of life, and traditional burial and cremation can have significant environmental impacts.

The Honorable Bob Such introduced new burial legislation, the Burial and Cremations Act (2012), to allow for the establishment of natural burial grounds in South Australia. The Act sets natural burial grounds as distinct and separate from cemeteries and calls for the use of biodegradable coffins or shrouds without embalming or the use of toxic chemicals.

A restoration natural burial ground takes this concept a step further, with proceeds from burials helping to fund conservation and restoration actions both on the natural burial ground site and elsewhere. This represents a harmonious blend of environmental stewardship and a respectful approach to honouring departed loved ones. Restoration natural burial with sustainability principles, offering an alternative that fosters a deeper connection between the deceased and the natural world.

Over the past year, we have been collaborating with the Natural Burial Ground Trust of Australia and Alexandrina Council to identify a suitable site and obtain the necessary approvals to progress the proposal to the next stage. The Old Goolwa Cemetery on Kessell Road, Goolwa was identified as having all the right attributes.

The restoration natural burial ground offers individuals and families an affordable and environmentally friendly burial option, linking the death of a loved one to the restoration of the local ecosystem. This restoration natural burial ground provides a unique public facility and burial option for the people of the Fleurieu Peninsula and supports the revegetation, restoration, and expansion of native habitats at the Old Goolwa Cemetery site.

Managed by the Natural Burial Ground Trust of Australia in close collaboration with the Nature Foundation, the site will feature the planting of local native species, contributing to ongoing ecological restoration, with a vision to see this parcel of land returned to a natural bush setting in the coming years.

In this model, all revenue from the burial ground operation:

- Contributes toward the restoration and management of the burial ground itself, and
- Surplus revenue contributes to other Nature Foundation conservation and land restoration projects – such as revegetation to support the threatened Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren (*Stipiturus malachurus intermedius*) population at Watchalunga Nature Reserve.

We are excited to be working with the Natural Burial Ground Trust of Australia and Alexandrina Council on this progressive initiative.



It's been exciting and satisfying to work with Nature Foundation and Alexandrina Council to bring this vision to life. We see this as the first of a national network of restoration burial grounds, all providing vital recurring funding for environmental programs."

— Kevin Hartley, founder of the Natural Burial Ground Trust of Australia.



“

We're incredibly proud that the Employee Foundation has been able to play a role in restoring habitat for woodland birds at Para Woodlands Nature Reserve through our donations, creating a place where they and other native species can thrive. Equally meaningful has been our support of the Kids on Country program – both initiatives reflect the heart of our Foundation, backing projects our people feel connected to and that make a lasting difference for South Australia.”

– Isabell Al-Nahat Employee Foundation Executive Officer



SAPNEF staff planting day

Partnership spotlight SA Power Networks Employee Foundation

Partnerships play a crucial role in supporting our mission and the work that accompanies it. We are grateful to our partners, who bring a diverse set of values, priorities, resources, and competencies to the table, all connected by a shared vision and a desire to achieve genuine outcomes for nature conservation.

Through partnerships with businesses and organisations, we collaborate to make a bigger contribution to the prosperity of our natural environment—more projects in more places with more people across South Australia and beyond.

We appreciate the long-term relationships we have developed with key partners, including multi-year support from organisations such as SA Power Networks Employee Foundation.

Established in 2006, the SA Power Networks Employee Foundation is a registered charity governed by a committee that offers employees, their families, and friends the opportunity to support South Australian charities through donations, fundraising, and volunteering opportunities. What sets the Foundation apart is that it is driven by SA Power Networks and Enerven staff themselves; funded primarily through payroll donations and fundraising efforts, with every dollar going directly to causes they care deeply about.

The charities supported aren't chosen at random; they reflect what employees feel most connected to: whether it's homelessness, disadvantaged youth,

mental health, LGBTQIA+ support, domestic violence, cancer, or the environment. And with the Foundation matching up to \$5,000 for each staff fundraising activity, their impact is multiplied even further.

In 2024 alone, the Employee Foundation supported 47 charities and donated more than \$600,000. Since 2006, their staff-driven generosity has contributed over \$6 million to charities across South Australia.

SA Power Networks Employee Foundation has proudly supported Nature Foundation since its inception, donating \$170,000 to support Nature Foundation's conservation and Aboriginal engagement programs, and involving employees in volunteering, citizen science, and inspiring them to help protect South Australia's natural environment. Over this period, 400 employees have supported 14 planting days across Watchalunga and Para Woodlands Nature Reserves, helping to plant over 30,000 native species and contributing approximately 1,000 volunteer hours.





Fundraising: Donations and Appeals

The invaluable support of our donors directly fuels our conservation work, leading to tangible and positive results for biodiversity.

As the cost of living continues to rise in Australia, we are deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our forward-thinking donors. Your contributions are not just financial, but a symbol of your belief in our mission. Thank you.

In addition to offering a range of conservation areas that donors can support throughout the year, we held two major appeals during the 2024–2025 financial year:

- Forever Nature Fund: Supporting land management activities on our latest acquisition, Mongolurring Nature Reserve
- Vital Work Appeal: Funding critical equipment to resource our volunteers and fieldwork team.

Following the success of the 2024 Vital Work Appeal, where we exceeded our target, we set our sights even higher for 2025. With a goal of \$150,000, we aimed to support volunteer resources, equipment, and essential fencing work at the Mongolurring Nature Reserve. We were thrilled to not only meet but surpass our goal, with the appeal raising an impressive \$185,000!

We also had the unplanned opportunity to be involved with Officeworks' Make a Difference Appeal in June 2025, after being nominated by an unknown source. This appeal presented an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and funds for the Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Program, with 10 Officeworks stores across South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales championing the cause.

We were deeply moved by the generosity of Officeworks staff and customers. Their donations at the checkout and online raised a significant \$20,518 for the Kids on Country™ Junior Ranger Program. This unexpected boost is a strong signal of the power of collaboration and will enable one school to attend a camp, furthering our efforts to support conservation knowledge and cultural connection in Aboriginal young people.

Every donation, regardless of its size, is a significant contribution to our cause. Your support is what enables us to make a real difference for conservation and biodiversity across South Australia and beyond. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and commitment to our mission. Thank you.

Leaving a Legacy

Bequests Update

The decision to leave a gift in your Will to Nature Foundation can have a hugely beneficial impact on biodiversity.

We deeply value the support of our bequestors and their families, and the effect their actions will have beyond their lifetime. A gift in Will is the ultimate investment in future generations.

Our Forever Nature Fund is also an investment in the future. The Board agreed that all bequests—whether financial or gifts of land—would be directed towards this fund, supporting the acquisition and management of more protected habitat.

This past year has seen a further increase in confirmed bequestors for Nature Foundation, along with a significant value of bequests received, enabling us to ensure the conservation of increasing areas of land.

Thank you to these incredible individuals and their families. You are making a real difference for nature and conservation in South Australia and beyond.

Major Gifts Update

While all donations provide immense value to our conservation efforts, we would like to acknowledge the significant impact of our Major Gift donors, who contribute \$5,000 or more.

Their generous contributions play a crucial role in our mission; often wishing to support quietly, their donation itself is the sole reward and recognition they require.

Over the last couple of years, we have established a new way to directly recognise and show our appreciation for those who are making an impact on nature with an annual commitment of \$10,000 or more, pledged for five years.

These donors make a valuable contribution to Nature Foundation's land management, science, research, engagement, and education work. They are invited to actively learn about Nature Foundation's planned approach to land management, which they are helping to deliver. We have welcomed new members to Nature Circle over the past year and value their enduring support.

Policy Review

Over the past couple of years, Nature Foundation has undertaken a meticulous and comprehensive review and update of the organisation's policies, procedures, and associated forms and resources.

This thorough process has ensured the delivery of our objective to maintain a fit-for-purpose system and policies and procedures and has also heavily focused on ensuring a sound Work Health and Safety system.

The approach has involved assessing all existing policies, identifying opportunities to consolidate related policies, and identifying additional areas that require new policies, such as cybersecurity. As mentioned, work health and safety have been a key theme throughout the process, and we have ensured all scenarios are accounted for, including safe driving and bushfires. The review also included remote communication and check-in procedures and technology, resulting in hardware and software updates to ensure the continued connection with and safety of the staff team when working out in the field.

The Board approved updates to the organisation's policies and procedures at the May Board meeting, completing the current policy review, and confirming future review timeframes. This proactive approach ensures that our policies are always up-to-date and in line with the latest industry standards.

With our growing network of nature reserves, and the variety of people who access them, the impact of our work health and safety systems cannot be underestimated. At the end of the day, our primary aim is to ensure everyone gets home safe."

– Alex Nankivell, CEO.

Our Partners

First Nations Partners



Adnyamathanha
Traditional Lands
Association



GAWLER RANGES
ABORIGINAL
CORPORATION



NGARRINDJERI
ABORIGINAL
CORPORATION

Corporate Partners



Government Partners



NGO Partners



Conservation Research Partners



Industry Partners



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NATURE ALLIANCE



Be part of the change you would like to see

If you would like to help make a real difference for nature across
SA and beyond, there are many ways to get involved.

naturefoundation.org.au/change





We invite you to support us

Conserve, restore and protect our unique natural landscapes, flora and fauna to ensure their survival for future generations.

Become a member

Join a passionate group of people dedicated to conserving, restoring and protecting our precious natural landscapes, floodplains and wetlands, and make a real difference for nature conservation.

Become a volunteer

Whether it's meeting like-minded people, gaining new skills, or offering your specialist skills for a great cause, volunteering for nature can be a fantastic experience. There are many ways to help and make a difference for nature.

Make a donation or bequest

The generosity of donors enables us to achieve so much for nature conservation in Australia. Donations can be large or small, individual or corporate, regular or occasional. They can be financial or in the form of land, water or goods. Every donation counts.

Partnerships

We love developing enduring partnerships with our corporate supporters. If you would like to explore how your organisation can support our cause, do get in touch.

Connect with Nature Foundation

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